

rhythm of the mass flight of stingless drones (worker honeybees of *dorsata* are endowed with venomous stings) and the starting of predatory forage of the False Vampire Bats coincide, thus making a prey-predator relationship possible.

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21. A NEW LARVAL FOOD PLANT OF THE COMMON ALBATROSS *APPIAS ALBINA* (BOISDUVAL), WITH A NOTE ON ITS MIGRATION IN KERALA¹

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The Common Albatross *Appias albina* (Boisduval) is a resident of evergreen and semi evergreen forests. It is also well known for its migratory habit (Home 1935; Williams 1938; Wynter-Blyth 1957; Larsen 1978, 1987a,b; Kunte 2000; Palot *et al.* 2002; Mathew and Binoy 2002).

Lepidopteran fauna exploration at Koyilandy, during November-January 2002 and 2003 resulted in a new host plant record – *Crateva religiosa* (Capparaceae) – for the Common Albatross *Appias albina* (Boisduval) (Lepidoptera: Pieridae). Later during December-February 2005, at Vatakara, I recorded the breeding of Common Albatross on the same plant.

Common Albatross *Appias albina* (Boisduval) reportedly feeds on *Drypetes oblongifolia*, *Drypetes roxburghii* and *Drypetes venusta* (Euphorbiaceae). The occurrence and successful rearing of *Appias albina* on *Crateva religiosa* confirms it as a new larval food plant.

Palot *et al.* (2002) reported migration of these butterflies starting from Coorg and passing through Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary of Kerala during November-January. Mathew and Binoy (2002) further reported a migration of butterflies at

the New Amarambalam reserve forest of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. Palot (pers comm.) is of the opinion that from November to January there is a movement of butterflies from Coorg to Nilgiris passing through the eastern parts of Kerala. These reports confirm the dominance of Common Albatross in migratory flights.

The actual reason behind butterfly migration is still unknown. It is suggested that stimulation to migrate might be due to population outbreaks leading to depletion of host plants and adult food resources (Ford 1990; Gilbert and Singer 1975; Mathew and Binoy 2002). Nair (2005) reports the occurrence and breeding of Common Albatross outside forest areas in Kerala and also suggests the depletion of host plants as the reason for butterfly migration. The present record also strengthens this opinion.

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